

AGAINST COLONIAL OPPRESSION

The Revolt in Palestine.

Communique of the C. C. of the C. P. of Palestine.

(Conclusion.)

c) From National Struggle to Anti-Imperialist Insurrection.

Things, however, did not develop quite as the clever British politicians had intended; for their purposes a modest "massacre of St. Bartholomew" among the Jews would have sufficed, justifying an increased British occupation (such as had become requisite in view of the active war preparations) and strengthening the British position of arbiter between the "wild Arabs" on the one hand and the "menaced Jews" on the other. The Jewish blood shed during the pogrom and the Arab blood to be shed during the inevitable consequent "punitive expedition" would have done very well to oil the wheels of British imperialism in the Arab East. The attitude of the masses, however, had not been taken into account.

The elementary force of the outbreak after eight years and a half of cruel and systematic imperialist oppression (the last rising, which also took the form of a pogrom, having been quenched in blood in May 1921) under the unscrupulously arbitrary rule of a handful of colonial officials and without the safety-valve of even apparent democracy or right of appeal, was far greater than the British imperialists or even the clerical leaders of the movement had ever imagined. A local movement in Jerusalem turned in a few days' time into a Pan-Arab insurrectionary movement with aims far exceeding the massacre of the Jews. The situation thus became threatening for British imperialism. If it had been properly organised and systematically conducted (which it could have been only by the working class), this mass movement, which had spread to **hundreds of thousands of peasants, bedouins, and city workers**, would have taken the form not of a senseless religious war but of a powerful anti-imperialist revolution, ensuring a **victory over imperialism** at many important points.

A small example will show the truth of this assertion. If the powerful rural movement round about Jerusalem, combined with the rising of workers within the city on August 24th and 25th, i. e. before the arrival of the first British reinforcements, had, instead of pitting itself against the Jewish settlements, moved concentrically towards the interior of the town, it could undoubtedly have stormed the central Government buildings and got possession of the Government apparatus.

The Zionists, however, also did their share towards serving British imperialism and not permitting a development in the sense above indicated. Though unable at the first moment to

deny the obvious responsibility of the British Government, the Zionists immediately started to exploit the situation in the sense of a further accentuation of Jewish-Arab differences and established a united front with the British against the Arabs. Mere self-defence against the attacks of the fanaticised mob was exceeded by the Zionist Fascists, who proceeded to revert themselves on innocent Arabs wherever they were found to be surrounded by Jews, and here and there there were regular counter-pogroms. Thus two poor innocent workers were beaten to death with truly bestial fury by a crowd of Jews in the main street of Jerusalem on August 24th; close to the Bezalel Museum a poor fellah woman was foully murdered; at Jaffa Jewish Fascists murdered an entire Arab family of women and children; three Arab houses situated near the Jewish colonies were pillaged and burnt down on the 26th (in revenge for the burning and pillage of the Jewish colonies of Hartov, Huldah, and Beituviah); on the road to Jaffa Arab shops were broken up and plundered. Though there were no organised attacks on Arab settlements — which would have been absurd seeing that the Jews are but a small minority in the country — the Zionist Fascists yet did all they could to confirm the Arab belief that it is really the Jews who are their chief enemies, to prevent the treacherous Arab leaders from having an occasion to allow the fury of the mob to turn against their real enemy, the British imperialists.

Nevertheless, such a change of front was not altogether impeded. In the purely Arab districts (Nablus, Tulkarem, Gaza, Transjordan) the angry Arabs collided immediately with the British soldiery. At Jaffa, Hamdi-ef-el-Husseini, secretary of the Anti-Imperialist League in the Arab territory and leader of the national-revolutionary wing of the Arabs, openly advocated an anti-imperialist rising in place of the murder of innocent Jewish inhabitants. At Haifa, the representative of the workers in the Young Moslem Association warned his fellow-members against instituting pogroms and called upon them to unite with the Jewish workers for the destruction of imperialism and its Zionist adherents. Finally, the same tendency was to be seen in the numerous skirmishes which took place (at Samakh, on the Syrian frontier, at the outlets into Transjordan, in southern Palestine, etc.) between the Bedouins and the British troops that entered the land towards the end of August.

Just at the moment when the clerical leaders of the movement betrayed their followers most basely (on the 27th August, the chairman of the Moslem Medjless — the spiritual rector of the movement — the Mohammedan mayor of Jerusalem, and the chairman of the Arab Executive Committee issued a declaration, calling on their followers to submit to the movement had almost all along the line turned into an anti-imperialist rising. This fact is confirmed by the circumstance that on September 1st John Chancellor, the British High Commissioner, issued a proclamation in which he expressed his indignation at the atrocities — only of the Arabs — and announced that as a "punishment" he had interrupted the negotiations in progress regarding constitutional changes in Palestine (i. e. the Arab national-reformist demand for a parliament); this at the same time revealed the imperialist "excitation" of the massacre and constituted a fresh provocation to the Arabs.

Besides this, the British "reprisals" are being effected so cruelly and unscrupulously that, apart from the fighting on the borders, the indignation of the masses may easily lead to a renewed outbreak in the country itself. In any case the Arab rising, deflected as it was into anti-Jewish channels, by its means represents the end of the entire movement, but at the same time the first stage in a new Arab revolution, just as the Syrian rising in 1925 was part of the same great anti-imperialist revolt. It has shown that the stability of British rule and the Zionist agencies in Palestine is just as unreliable and shaky as is that of French rule in Syria (where the Palestine rising caused a demonstration of solidarity of many thousands of Syrians); that of the British vassals Feisal and Abdullah in Iraq and Transjordan, respectively (where serious friction also occurred).

By an unheard-of terrorism the troops of MacDonald and Henderson attempt to stamp out the symptoms of emancipation which in spite of the most ingenious imperialist precautions have become apparent among the Arab colonial masses. Hundreds of suspects are arrested and put into irons; villages and towns are bombarded, maximum contributions imposed and collected with brutal force (the Zionists and Zionist-Socialists

including the treacherous "Left" Poale Zion, co-operating in this imperialist terrorism against the Arab peasants and workers and developing an awful propaganda which exaggerates the Arab excesses tremendously and carefully conceals those of the Jews.) Apart from their "organised" reprisals, the occupation troops practice a form of sport, racing around in cars and sniping at the Arab "natives" (including the women and children) in passing. Humanity and civilisation held a triumphal entry over smoking ruins.

The pogrom-leaders of the Arab national-reformists and of the Zionist Fascist remained just as immune as did the British officials. But the revolutionary nationalist leader Hamdi Husseini, who had spoken against the pogroms and in favour of an anti-imperialist fight, has been arrested and is threatened with capital punishment; hundreds of innocent Jewish and Arab peasants are being condemned behind closed doors.

d) The Working Class and the Communist Party.

In this revolt the working class of Palestine did not come forward as an independent force with demands of its own, though there can be no doubt but that the working class of the cities (Arabs and Jews together) has grown substantially of late years and would, so far as its numbers were concerned and in view of the bad economic position of the workers, well have been in a position to play an important, nay a leading, rôle in the recent mass movement if it had come forward in a determined revolutionary spirit.

But the activity of the Zionist social-reformists has driven a wedge into the working class, not only by founding a Jewish chauvinist organisation, the "Histadruth" which upon the outbreak of the revolt became an appendage of Jewish fascism and the British imperialists, but also by exploiting the monopoly of organisation it had procured from the British and Zionists for the purpose of keeping the Arab workers out of the "Histadruth" and preventing their revolutionary organisation by all possible means. Further, there do not exist any purely Arab, revolutionary mass organisations in the country.

Thus the only international revolutionary organisation in the country was the Communist Party of Palestine, which is yet in its infancy and much harassed by constant persecution on the part of the British Government apparatus and the Zionist and Arab bourgeoisie. This Party alone stood for the interests of the working class as such. Untiringly it sought, in pamphlets, handbills, illegal assemblies, and even demonstrations (in the face of official terrorism, on August 1st), to impress on Jewish and Arab workers alike: Do not fight one another, but unite against British imperialism and its Zionist and feudal Arab bourgeois adherents. It may be said that at the outbreak of the movement the estimation of the position by the C. P. of Palestine — British imperialism desires national-religious bloodshed so as to strengthen its own rule at the expense of Jewish and Arab workers — was shared by the majority of both Arab and Jewish workers. The last appeal of the C. P., on the day when the revolt began, was approved by 99 per cent. of the workers at the Haifa railway shops, including many Jewish workers and even Socialists. As a matter of fact, though there was no fraternisation of Jewish and Arab workers, there were various remarkable instances of solidarity (individual Jewish workers being saved by Arabs in various cities and, again, Arabs being saved by Jews from the revenge of the Zionist Fascists). But, obviously because the influence of the C. P. was too weak in relation to both Jewish and Arab workers, there was a total absence of mass action, which could indeed only have taken the form of a fraternisation against British imperialism.

The course of events, however, clearly proved that if the proportionate strength of the workers and peasants had been greater (or, rather, if the fellahs had been under the influence of the workers instead of that of the feudal and clerical interests), there would have been every possibility of a victorious revolution and the establishment of a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants.

It is just for this reason and to prevent such a development, at the head of which the C. P. would undoubtedly place itself, that the Zionists on the one hand and the Arab feudal chiefs on the other are doing their utmost to widen the national chasm yet more and to make religious warfare permanent. The "Davar", the press organ of the Social-Fascists, publishes "songs of victory", which culminate in a eulogy of the massacres and conflagrations and are intended to fan the national hatred

among the workers. Similarly, the Arab national-reformists still proclaim that what is needed is a revolt against the Jews and not against the British and spread illusions abroad in regard to a prospective "neutral" British mission which will "bring the truth to light".

Meanwhile the Communist Party proclaims: "Peace to the working people — war to the imperialist rulers! Continue the fight, not against one another but with one another against imperialism, Zionism, and the Arab national traitors. Do not allow yourselves to be disarmed. Create a government of workers and peasants which alone can guarantee to safeguard the interests of the workers. All Arab countries unite to form an independent republic of workers and peasants."

If the Palestine workers and peasants can be sure of the solidarity and help of the proletarian masses in England, America, France, Germany, and the other imperialist countries, then — notwithstanding all MacDonal's aeroplanes and armoured cars, warships and machine-guns, notwithstanding all the diabolical pogroms initiated by his officials, in spite of the agitation of the Zionists and Social-Fascists and in spite of the treachery of the Arab feudal lords and bourgeoisie — they may be certain of realising the great task of liberation.

FIGHT AGAINST RIGHT DANGER

Characteristics of Soviet Economy.

By A. Leontiev.

During the elaboration last autumn of the economic plan for 1928/29, Comrade Bukharin came forward with this "Remarks of an Economist", which were destined to acquire a rather regrettable notoriety. The train of thought expounded in this work and in the relative speech by Comrade Bukharin on the political testament of Lenin, became, so to say, the gospel of the Right elements in the Party. In the slightly masked form of fairly transparent allusions and circumscriptions, Comrade Bukharin in these utterances formulated an entire system of views on the present fundamental questions of economic construction. He attempted to outline a definite attitude in regard to economic politics, an attitude essentially differing and deviating from the general directives of the Party. That he, who was one of the most prominent economic theorists of our Party — in which capacity he can look back upon an undoubtedly meritorious activity — should in the first and most difficult period of the fundamental reconstruction of economy have started to oppose the Party directives, is a fact calling for the serious attention of the entire Communist Party.

I.

The concrete political conclusions resulting from the present attitude of Comrade Bukharin, conclusions which he put forward in a somewhat veiled but yet sufficiently transparent form, are on lines parallel to the universally known demands of the Right elements in our Party; they are directed against the rapid and allegedly unbearable and exaggerated rate of industrialisation, which is said to be the chief reason of our economic difficulties, against the forced and allegedly "artificial" imposition of Communism upon our rural districts, against the rapid development of the Soviet and collective farms, and against the resolute pressure brought to bear on the leading capitalist elements in the villages. Such are the conclusions which have already been revealed to the broad mass of Party members. The apprehensions of Comrade Bukharin regarding the present economic year have not been realised, and his prophecies have failed brilliantly; they could not stand the test of practice. This failure is fully apparent now that the results of the economic year 1928/29 in the most important branches of economy are to hand and the prospects of the coming year 1929/30 assume tangible forms. The reality of our economic development is treating the prophecies and suggestions of the Right in the same way that the Arabian sages recommend in regard to the counsels of women, viz. "listen to them and then do the contrary."

The results of the year 1928/29 and the prospects for 1929/30 bear witness in the first place to the greatest successes and achievements of Socialist construction, which have been realised in spite of the pessimistic prophecies of the Right panic mongers and doubters. In answer to their laments over the "unreal and unbearable" rate of industrialisation, reality shows